DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 274 413 PS 015 870

AUTHOR Tate, Costella
TITLE Family Day Care: Implications for the Black Community.
INSTITUTION Children's Foundation, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Oct 85
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the National Black Child Development Institute, Inc. (15th, Washington, DC, October 16-18, 1985).
PUB TYPE Viewpoints (120) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Black Community; *Black Family; Child Caregivers; *Community Problems; Early Childhood Education; *Family Day Care; *Local Issues

ABSTRACT

This paper describes family day care and discusses how it is being used to meet the great need for child care in the Black community. The paper also reviews some of the concerns that affect Black caregivers and suggests some possible ways to strengthen the profession. Issues addressed include: What is family day care? Who are the caregivers? How do providers benefit the Black community? What are the Black community's needs for child care? Is there a large demand for infant and school age care? What are some of the concerns and realities that could hinder the growth of family day care in the Black community? Concerns discussed are the following: (1) providers defray a large part of the cost of child care; (2) the vast majority of providers operate underground; (3) Black providers have openings but parents have difficulties finding them; (4) providers do not offer quality child care in their homes; (5) Black family day care providers do not take advantage of the Child Care Food Program; and (6) the family day care profession is an underrated, de-valued, and isolated profession. Concluding remarks offer several recommendations for improving family day care for Blacks and others. A two-page bibliography is included. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

THE CHILDREN'S FOUNDATION
815 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Suite 928 • Washington, D.C. 20005
(202) 347-3300

Barbara Bode
President

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED274413

FAMILY DAY CARE--IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Prepared for

Fifteenth Annual Conference

National Black Child Development Institute, Inc.

Washington, D.C.

By

Costella Tate
National Advocacy Project
For Family Day Care
The Children's Foundation

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Costella Tate
Children's Found.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

October 1985

PS 015870

FAMILY DAY CARE--IMPLICATIONS FOR

THE BLACK COMMUNITY

Women caring for children in their homes is no new phenomenon in the black community. For years, black women have strongly depended upon their mothers, aunts and others to care for their children while they worked at low paying jobs. These caregivers accepted their kin into their homes and cared for them like their own children. For the Black working parents this arrangement was very cost effective because usually little or no money exchanged hands. As a result, parents expected nothing more than custodial care. Many such women still provide informal care for their kin and other children in the community. They provide these services because of the love they have for children. These caregivers make up a vast majority of the informal (unregulated) child care network. They are the silent pillars of support that have allowed the black community to advance through its economic survival from slavery to the present day.

In recent years, we have seen the emergence of a new type of Black home care provider. These are usually women who see their caregiving role as a professional one. Concerned about providing more than custodial care for children, they want to assist Black children in reaching their maximum potential for growth and development. They prepare themselves by attending

training programs for home care providers offered by social service agencies, colleges and universities. Many of these women have been attracted to this profession because they are aware of the growing need for child care in the Black community. It has also become a means for Black women to supplement the family income while they work at home. They prefer not to be called "babysitters" but "family day care providers" because they do much more than sit.

This paper will describe family day care and discuss how it is being used to meet the overwhelming need for child care in the Black community. It will also review some of the concerns that affect Black caregivers and suggest some possible ways to strengthen this valuable profession.

What is family day care?

Family day care is home-based child care--provided almost always by a woman in her own home--for six or fewer children. Currently, more than 1.5 million women in this country provide home based care to more than five million children, some 70% of the children in full-time care. Because most of the providers living in the Black community are not known to the licensing agencies and do not report their incomes, it is difficult to estimate realistically the number of caregivers and the number of children under their care.

Who are these caregivers?

According to the National Day Care Home Study Report, the average Black provider tends to be about 45 years of age and about 50% of them are married. They have little less than a high school education and their median household income is $6,750. The experience of these women tends to be based on their own family child rearing and the number of years they have been caring for children. They are generally classified in the low and moderate income levels. A number see themselves as small businesswomen--NOT babysitters--a stereotype that haunts them. From the point of view of the Black community, family day care providers are important because they are self-employed, self sufficient and offer a critically needed service to their neighbors.

How do providers benefit the Black community?

Providers offer an important flexibility that enables parents to arrange for fulltime or parttime care. The providers usually live in close proximity to the child's own home which offers a convenience for the parents. The homes of the Black caregivers allow the children to experience an environment similar to their own. Their small group size can allow children more opportunity to develop in independant ways. Providers may care for children of all ages--this allows parents with children

of varying ages to have a "one stop" child care convenience. The consistency of one provider gives the parents a sense of security and satisfaction. The most attractive benefit of all--family day care providers generally charge less than half of the cost of center-based care.

Family day is particularly appealing because Black children can receive individualized attention. Special needs of infants or children with disabilities or of parents who work late shifts can more easily be met. Since nearly half the mothers of children under two years old are in the work force, the demand for infant care is growing at an overwhelming pace. For infants and school age children, family day care is the major source of care in most Black communities.

What are the Black community needs for child care?

According to the U.S Census Report, there were 6.4 million Black families in this country. About 41 % of those families were maintained by women. These mothers account for 44% of all Black children. Less than half of these women were on public assistance and about 60% participate in the labor force. With so many Black women in the workforce, there is an obvious need for available, reliable and consistent child care.

The report also showed that the median family income for a black married couple was $19,620. The median income

for Black female household with no husband present was $7,510. Considering the median income level and the rising cost of living, it would appear that Black families are doing a balancing act to maintain their economic stability.

In the last decade, the cost of child care has skyrocketed and the federal government has reduced the funds for day care programs. This has been traumatic for Black communities. Much needed quality child care programs have slowly gone out of existence and others are struggling to stay afloat. The parents are left with the tremendous task of finding affordable day care. Most of them have turned to family day care for the solution.

In an effort to stretch the federal dollar, local social service agencies have also turned to family day care. These caregivers provide subsidized care for their public assistance mothers who are completing school, job training programs or who are trying to maintain low entry level jobs. As a result more children can be placed in day care and more low income mothers can seek employment. Usually these agencies have also encourage some of these women to become family day care providers. This gives potential caregivers access to an open job market if they have experience and a desire to work with small children. It also provides the community with a new supply of caregivers to meet the increasing demand for child care.

Is there a large demand for infant and school age care?

Recent surveys indicate that approximately 44% of women with children under the age of two are in the labor force. The majority of children under the age of two who are currently being cared for outside of the home are being cared for in family day care settings. More than 40% of women with children under the age of one are working. Black parents seeking out-of-home care for their infants usually rely on family day care because there are so few centers offering infant care in the community. Infant center slots tend to be extremely expensive (the weekly cost may run over $100.00 a week). The rapid influx of infants into the home day care market has helped to elevate the status of family day care providers.

In addition to the large numbers of infants and toddlers, family day care homes also provide care for millions of school age children. The National Day Care Home Study found that family day care represented, "the most prevalent mode of care...for school children between 6 and 13 whose parents work". Despite recent concerns about the growing numbers of latch key children, Black communities have not solved this problem. Unable to assume the cost of care for this age group parents pay the providers very little for their service.

Family day care has been responding to the needs of the Black community for years. It is clear that this is a profes-

sion that needs to be supported, protected and tendered. If Black parents are to progress up the social and ecomonic ladder, then meeting their child care needs must be the first order of business.

What are some of the concerns and realities that could hinder the growth of family day care in the Black community?

Concern #1: Providers defray a large part of the cost of child care.

Family day care providers continue to earn, on an average, significantly less than minimum wage. Home based care adjusts to a supply and demand market and with it the restrictions that a parent's income places on the amount of money the provider can charge. In the private market, a regulated provider's income on an average may range from 30 to 50 dollars per child per week. Providers participating in a subsidized system may earn less, averaging about 30 to 40 dollars per child per week. Unregulated providers stand at the lowest end of the payment spectrum. Their income is entirely dependent upon the community in which they live and the number of children they take into their homes.

The vast majority of family day care providers caring for infants receive significantly less money than centers. Since parents can't afford to pay any more. The result is that

providers, while helping parents defray the high costs of infant care, are themselves the losers. Not only does infant care require far more work but caregivers are often required by the regulatory agency to reduce their overall number of children if they are caring for infants. Thus, their overall income is reduced, as well.

Concern #2: The vast majority of providers operate underground.

Recent studies indicate that 70% or more of all family day care remains unregulated. The common assumption that licensed homes are monitored frequently for various health and safety requirements is not matched by the reality. Licensing agencies in most states have been unable to monitor home or enforce standards due in part to budgetary and personnel cutbacks in recent years.

A survey conducted by The Children's Foundation in early 1984 found that 44 states had some form of regulation for family day care (either licensing, registration or certification). In the late 70's a movement that was started by day care providers, parents, advocates, as well as regulatory agencies, sought to revise licensing standards. This change was designed to encourage the participation of thousands of underground providers, into the regulatory system. The goals of this regulatory movement have been to promote an expanded and more

accessible day care market, to increase caregiver training, parent awareness and consumer monitoring, and to promote greater quality care. Yet efforts have been hampered by a continuing lack of funds, and a general state of crisis which exists within the regulatory field.

The vast majority of the Black day care providers continue to operate underground because they do not know about the requirements or they do not perceive themselves as family day care providers (they think the requirements are not meant for them because they do not see themselves as professionals), or because the system itself acts as a discouragement rather than an incentive to becoming regulated. While regulated providers are able to take advantage of federal and private programs, they may also be restricted in terms of numbers of children in a home, who specifically they can enroll in their home, and the type of program that they can run. Under such circumstances, providers prefer to operate underground, particularly if there is no pressure by the parents for becoming regulated.

Providers report that parents desperately needing child care services are not concerned about whether the regulations are being violated.

Family day care homes are often overcrowded with their full-time children and school age children during nontraditional school holidays, "snow days" and the before and after school

hours. With the increased numbers of children, providers often run the risk of jeopardizing the status of their license. Providers argue that this is not a problem because these older children are very helpful with the younger ones.

A few states require that providers obtain liability insurance in order to do child care in their home. In recent months, there has been an insurance crisis. This comes after several well publicized child abuse accusations made against child care professionals. Major insurance carriers providing liability coverage to family day care providers have either stopped writing new policies and have cancelled existing policies. In most Black communities this has become a real issue for both regulated and unregulated providers. A large number of these providers did not invest in any type of insurance previously and at the present time there is little available.

Calls made to The Children's Foundation indicate that some providers have lost their home owner's policies because of their home day care businesses. Renters tell us that some landlords have demanded that insurance be purchased.

With increased frequency, the operation of family day care homes in communities throughout the country is being jeopardized by restrictive local zoning requirements and covenants. At issue are the rights of providers to operate day care in their homes in residential neighborhoods. In most

localities, zoning requirements and regulations governing family day care providers do not complement each other. This causes conflict and hassle for caregivers who do not have the skills of a lawyer nor the money to wage against government funded agencies.

Concern #3. Black providers have openings but parents have difficulties finding them.

An estimated 1.5 to 2 million women in the United States care for other women's children in their own homes. Yet only a fraction of the family day care providers are known to the communities in which they live. Many Black parents find their providers through word of mouth, churches and schools. Information and referral services normally do not attract Black providers living in all areas of the community. Also many Black parents do not have the money to pay the fees which some agencies require. It is futile for these parents to seek services of an Information & Referral Service if there are no providers available in their neighborhood.

In some Black communities, day care centers have organized family day care satellite systems. This type of a system contracts with providers living in the area surrounding the center, to provide child care. Parents come to the center

and they are referred to the system's pool of providers. Most centers do not charge the parents for the referral service and the arrangements for child care are made rather promptly.

Social Service agencies have a listing of the providers with whom they contract services for parents needing subsidized child care. Licensing agencies also provide a list to consumers but few offer any other services to parents.

Concern # 4: Providers do not offer quality child care in their homes.

Family day care is a very underrated profession. It is considered as being at the lowest end of the spectrum in the early childhood community. The general feeling is that children learn very little in family day care home because they are not structured environments and the providers themselves do not have the educational expertise in child development.

The National Home Day Care Study indicated that the median age for Black providers was forty years old with a median of 11.4 years of education. Many of these women have the first hand experience of rearing their own children and others in the neighborhood. Their techniques may be interpreted as somewhat old fashioned and sometimes unorthodox. Does this mean they are incapable of working with children because they do

not have a formal education in early childhood development? Certainly not. When and if these women attend training classes they may have a few things to teach the instructors.

The development of training materials, curriculum and classes designed for home care providers began in the late 60's. During this period, the government became the funding mechanism for low income child care through the Title IV-A and Title XX programs. There was much concern about the ability of the home caregiver to provide a safe, healthy and appropriate learning environment for children. There was also concern about the quality of care that low income children would receive during their child care experience. Training funds were made available to teach the home care providers about their family day care role and their work with children. Some Black providers have received this type of training. Many are not aware that such training exists because of the poor outreach effects by the program sponsors. In only three states are the family day care providers required to attend training. Some caregivers have doubts and/or fears about attending "school" and they readily suggest that they don't need to learn about working with children.

The availability of training for day care providers has declined considerably because of budget cuts to the Title XX program and the implementation of the Block Grants to the

States. Monies for training assumed a bottom line position. Studies indicate that training of caregivers is an important element in improving the quality of care that children receive.

Concern #5: Black Family day care providers do not take advantage of the Child Care Food Program.

The Child Care Food Program is the single largest federal support for family day care. By serving nutritious meals to children in home-based care on a daily basis, CCFP promotes proper diets and healthy bodies. Because of this program, many Black children are being properly fed and the parents do not have to assume this enormous expense. However, many Black caregivers do not participate in the program. This is largely due to the fact that the vast majority operate underground and they are unaware of the program. The CCFP sponsors need to target their recruitment efforts at Black family day care providers (both regulated and unregulated). Many providers explain a lack of interest in the program because of burdensome paperwork and monitoring visits. Consequently these caregivers assume the cost of feeding the children themselves.

Concern #6: The family day care profession is an underrated, de-valued and isolated profession.

As previously indicated, large numbers of parents are using

family day care for their infants. When these children reach preschool age they are often shifted to day care centers if they are available and affordable. The underlying premise of the shift from home to center care is that children receive a stronger preschool education, learn more, and ultimately, are better prepared for school, if they have the benefits of a more structured educational environment. In reaction to this, providers begin to transform their homes into mini-day care centers. Caregivers have not been given affirmation for the services they do offer and along with parents they fail to recognize the advantages for children in the family day care setting. When day care homes try to be mini-centers, everyone loses.

Isolation is a major problem for family day care providers. They work long hours and have little contact with others in their profession. Many are not aware that other providers are working to form associations which may exist in their own communities. This contact is very valuable. Participation in a provider oriented organization wil give them peer support and a sense of pride.

Conclusion

Family day care is a cost effective way to meet the growing demand for child care. In most cases, it is the only option available for parents needing infant and school age services for their children. Providers adjust their rates to meet what their parents can afford to pay. In the Black community most providers are paid very little and they experience difficulties meeting their financial needs.

Even though 44 states have some form of regulation for home care providers, large numbers of home caregivers remain unregulated in Black communities. As a result, they are not eligible to participate in the Child Care Food Program, government funded child care subsidized programs, referral services and some family day care training programs.

Family day care providers perform a valuable service to the community but they receive little respect or recognition. In recent months, there has been more concern showed for this profession. The U.S. Congress has advanced several child care proposals, but to date no bills have been passed.

There is much concern about the type of care that children are receiving in family day care homes. It is important that both providers and parents be educated to the needs of Black children. Training programs should be made available within the Black community and all providers should be encouraged

to attend. Colleges and universities must add family day care classes into their early childhood education curriculum. These programs should train providers to teach other caregivers -- this is a way to reach the unlicensed provider.

Bibliography

Abt Associates, CHILDREN AT THE CENTER, Abt Associates, Cambridge, Massachusetts,1979

Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, FINAL REPORT OF THE NATIONAL DAY CARE HOME STUDY: FAMILY DAY CARE IN THE UNITED STATES, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, D.C., September, 1981.

Berger, Brigitte and Callahan, Sidney, Editors, CHILD CARE AND MEDIATING STRUCTURES, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, Washington, D.C.,1979.

Berry, Gordon L. and Mitchell-Kernan, Claudia, Editors, TELEVISION AND THE SOCIALIZATION OF THE MINORITY CHILD, Academic Press, New York, 1982.

Blum, Marian, THE DAY-CARE DILEMMA WOMEN AND CHILDREN FIRST, D.C. Heath and Company, Lexington, Massachusetts, 1983

Coelen, Craig, Glantz, Frederic, Calore, Daniel, DAY CARE CENTERS IN THE U.S. A NATIONAL PROFILE 1976-1977, Abt Books, Cambridge Books, 1979

Coleman, Madeleine, Editor, BLACK CHILDREN JUST KEEP ON GROWING, Black Child Development Institute, Washington, D.C., 1977.

Children's Defense Fund, A CHILDREN'S DEFENSE BUDGET, CDF. Washington, D.C., 1984.

Clearinghouse Publication No. 67, CHILD CARE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN, United States Commission on Civil Rights, June, 1981.

Congress of the United States, REDUCING POVERTY AMONG CHILDREN, Congressional Budget Office, Washington, D.C., May 1985.

Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1980 PRESIDENT'S NATIONAL URBAN POLICY REPORT, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1980.

Family Day Care Advocacy Project, 1983-1985 FAMILY DAY CARE LICENSING STUDY, The Children's Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1985.

Green, Robert L., THE URBAN CHALLENGE-POVERTY AND RACE, Follett Publishing Company, Chicago, 1977.

Hale, Janice E., BLACK CHILDREN, Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah, 1982.

Keniston, Kenneth and The Carnegie Council on Children, ALL OUR CHILDREN THE AMERICAN FAMILY UNDER PRESSURE, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, New York, 1977

Matney, William C. and Johnson, Dwight L., AMERICAN BLACK POPULATION: A STATISTICAL VIEW, 1970-1982, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., 1983.

Ogbu, John U., MINORITY EDUCATION AND CASTE THE AMERICAN SYSTEM IN CROSS-CULTURAL PERSPRECTIVE, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, New York,1978

O'Hara, Joseph et al., PROJECT CONNECTIONS: A STUDY OF CHILD CARE INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES, American Institues for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, Mass., 1979.

Roby, Pamela, Ed., CHILD CARE-WHO CARES? FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC INFANT AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT POLICIES, Basic Books, Inc., New York, New York, 1973

Segal, Julius and Yahraes, Herbert, A CHILD'S JOURNEY FORCES THAT SHAPE THE LIVES OF OUR YOUNG McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1978

Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. House of Representatives, WORKING FAMILIES: ISSUES FOR THE 80's, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1984. Washington, D.C., 1984.

Steiner, Gilbert Y., THE CHILDREN'S CAUSE, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 1976

Weinstein, Lori, FAMILY DAY CARE: AN OVERVIEW OF ISSUES AND TRENDS, (unpublished paper), 1984

Weinstein, Lori, BARRIERS TO HOME DAY CARE ZONING RESTRICTIONS BLOCK OPERATION OF FAMILY DAY CARE HOMES, (unpublished paper), 1984

White House Conference of Children-1970, PROFILES OF CHILDREN, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1970.

Zigler, Edward R. and Gordon, Edmund W. Editors, DAY CARE: SCIENTIFIC AND SOCIAL POLICY ISSUES, Auburn House Publishing Co., Massachusetts, 1982.